

## Lorna Merkley Condon

Tape 350

Interviewed by Kathleen Irving, 7 August 2003

Transcribed by Marilyn Hunting, November 2004

This interview was conducted at the Condon home at 3330 West 2500 North.

Kathleen Irving (KI): Tell me the names of your parents.

Lorna Condon: My mother was Alice Hacking, born in Vernal May 23, 1895. My biological father was Ezra Merkley and he was quite a bit older than she was. [I had a] so-called stepfather, but he was more of a father to us than Mr. Merkley. I knew him quite well, but my brother and sister did not because my brother was eighteen months old and my sister was nine months and I was not yet five. [He left] my mother with three very sick children and they didn't expect her to live. It was flu time.

KI: You were born in 1914, so if you were five years old, this would have been 1919 when that really serious, worldwide epidemic of Spanish flu hit.

Lorna: It was. I should say, I well remember it. My mother was born in Vernal, my father was, too. He left her with three very sick children and thirty-five cents and a great big old white cow which we kept for a long time.

KI: Tell me your memories of that epidemic.

Lorna: Oh, I remember how sick we were. We had to wear masks over our faces all the time. We took terrible medicine, was coco-quinine. It was terrible, but it saved our lives apparently. So many died during that epidemic. It was so severe they couldn't hold public gatherings at all and funerals were held outside, or not at all, and people were just buried.

People who were immune to it, or didn't have it yet, would help the doctors and the nurse. I think they had one nurse in town, three doctors. They were so busy. This is what happened the night my father died. Dr. Francke had been up for many nights and had no rest. My mother called him and he couldn't come he was so tired. He would come the next morning, but by the next morning my father was dead. They just died like flies around here.

KI: Were you living in town?

Lorna: Yes, I was at that time. After that I went to live with my grandparents. We had to have a place to live.

KI: Did the flu hit the people living in town harder than it hit the people on the farms?

Lorna: No. I remember hearing about the people up Dry Fork. One of the men I remember, Orson Hall and his wife, would go and help people who were sick. There were many deaths in Dry Fork. I don't know about other surrounding areas, but I assume it was the same. There were no wonder drugs and they had to rely on just, actually, home remedies that these pioneers [had]. Well, they were pioneers, the people that settled this area.

I remember hearing Orson telling about going night after night to help people. I just remember it very vividly because my grandparents had quite a large home down on 1500 West and there was no mortuary of any kind. They would bring the dead people there till they could bury them. They were just terrible old, white coffins, brocaded material of some kind. That memory of that period has haunted me all my life.

KI: Who were your grandparents?

Lorna: My grandparents were John S. and Mary Elizabeth "Mame" Hacking. I have a picture of their home, I was born in their home.

KI: What was the address of that house?

Lorna: 1500 West at the intersection of "Righteous" Avenue. I think they still call it that. It's between 600 and 700 North.

KI: I'm sure as a five-year-old that must have been extremely traumatic for you.

Lorna: It was, and yet I think I weathered it better than some older [people]. Well, my aunt for instance, who was just six years older than I. I think I weathered it better than she did, because I had so many other different interests in life, even at that time.

KI: Your mother eventually recovered and all three of you children recovered. Did you stay in your house until you got better?

Lorna: We stayed with my grandparents until she married Wilson Murray, who was quite a bit older than she. But he stepped up to the plate and took on [our] care.

KI: Wilson Murray worked for the county, didn't he? I've seen a picture of him.

Lorna: Oh, yes. He was county clerk for many years. He was also chairman of the "Grand Old Party" for years. Of course, I worked at the courthouse, too. I worked for him in the county clerk's office. My aunt and I worked there and for four years we figured the taxes for Uintah County. We had an old adding machine that would multiply, divide and subtract. It's in the museum now.

KI: Who was your aunt?

Lorna: Jenny Hacking. She married Alton Hatch. They moved away, he worked for J.C. Penney Company.

Anyway, I worked for the county as a deputy clerk. Finally, I became County Clerk when my father resigned and went to work in the post office as the postmaster. During the period I worked in the recorder's office, I also worked for Mr. E. Peterson, he was the home agent for the Agricultural College. Later years, during the war in fact, when I came back here, I worked in the Assessor's Office. I spent quite a bit of time in that wonderful old building, which I'm sorry they tore down [the 1900 Uintah County Courthouse]. Such a beautiful park around it. Of course, my father was a self-trained botanist, he loved trees. He planted on that big park area there many different kinds of trees so the botany department from the high school could come and learn about those trees as well as all the native trees throughout the valley.

KI: I've seen pictures of the park with all those trees there. They used to have May Day dances there.

Lorna: Yes, I braided the Maypole many times in my little paper dress. Of course, they had a bandstand. We had a band which was from the high school, and before that they had a community band that played there all the time. I played in the orchestra, I didn't play in the band. During that period the Calder Brothers always set up a concession stand where they sold ice cream, hamburgers and hot dogs and that would be set up in front of the old building. I played the violin and my greatest contribution, I suppose, to the community, was the fact that I don't know how many hundreds of funerals I played at. Even up to this time.

KI: Who taught violin at that time?

Lorna: There was a man who had a studio in part of the old Confectionery building; his name was Mr. Taylor. My mother went to him to see if he would give me lessons. I was in the seventh grade then. He said, "Oh, no, she couldn't possibly learn." So my mother went to Norman Olsen, he was my first violin teacher. Then during my high school years, there was a Mr. Gilbert Childs came here, and I took lessons from him.

KI: This was mostly private lessons, not through the school?

Lorna: Well, Mr. Winn came during that period and played the saxophone, but he was one of the best violin teachers I ever had. I had to get it right and he developed an interest in music other than cowboy music. He developed a very good orchestra. I was first violin in the orchestra and played at all the functions in the old high school building. When I went away to college I played in the symphony orchestra for three years.

Mr. Lloyd Winn had developed this orchestra, he also developed a dance band. The orchestra played in all kinds of functions during that time. He left here and went out to Murray and I recently read a historical volume by Claren Ashby and he described their move from here to Murray and, lo and behold, Mr. Winn was there. This fellow had a very good singing voice, so he took chorus from Mr. Winn, and he also learned to play an instrument. He played in the dance band that Mr. Winn had out in Murray.

Incidentally, Mr. Winn died just three years ago. He was in his nineties and he was still taking his dance band from Murray to Hill Field to play for the people there. He was a wonderful, wonderful man. I certainly attribute much of my taste for good music to Mr. Lloyd Winn.

KI: Where was your house when your father died?

Lorna: 991 West Main. I finally sold that property to the state and they built that complex on that property for low-cost housing for the elderly. We used to own all that property there, twenty acres right there. Of course, we fell upon hard times during the Depression. My father was sick and my mother had to find a way to make a living. The school board was looking for property to build a new high school [located at 161 North 1000 West]. They contracted to buy the whole thing, then they decided they didn't need the whole thing. So they just bought from 10<sup>th</sup> West to what we called the town ditch, twenty acres there. My mother was left with the ten remaining acres. She built a duplex and also the little house across from the seminary building. Eventually, Mr. Landon was her home teacher and my father was very sick and my mother had invested money in a little clothing shop downtown and was trying to take care of my father. I couldn't come at that time, I'll tell you about that later.

Mr. Landon said to her, "Are you trying to do this all by yourself, Mrs. Murray?" She said yes.

“Well, I’ll get you some help from the church.” And he did. He lined up men who could come every night and help her with what had to be done for my father.

She was very grateful for the help and after my father died, quite a number of years later, she wanted to develop the rest of the property and put in housing. She did build herself the duplex and the little house on the corner. But the city wouldn’t let her develop the property, so in gratitude for what the church at done for her, she deeded the last portion of the property from First North to what we called the town ditch. It’s where the property for the school board ends. There was what we called the town ditch that came down through there. She deeded all that property to the church and they built the seminary building and also a portion of the parking area.

KI: Is that where the Ashley Stake Center is [850 West 100 North]?

Lorna: Well it’s west from the Ashley Stake Center. The margin of her property would have come just where the parking area begins west of the church. That’s what she did with the property. I did sell what was left to the state.

There was a house there and they bull-dozed it in. ‘Course, the original home burned in 1935 and my parents rebuilt another house there and it became rental property and I had the responsibility of it. We spent twenty-five years trying to keep nice housing for people that didn’t appreciate it and we never did charge high rent; I couldn’t see how they could afford it.

KI: When you were living in that house, where did you go to school? Did you go to Central?

Lorna: From when I was six years old, we went back to live in the original home. I lived there and went through grade school, high school, and then I went out to Brigham Young University for four years. Dave and were married July 24, 1935. He had at last obtained a permanent job with the National Park Service.

KI: You have to tell me about going to elementary school before we move on.

Lorna: I went to school in one of the oldest, not the oldest, but one of the oldest schools that was built in the valley. It was originally two rooms, then they built another room, an addition, on. The lot for the school was on 2<sup>nd</sup> South and South Vernal Avenue.

KI: That is where Central Elementary was. Was it the older building?

Lorna: Well, it was the older building. There were three grades. Two second grades and one first grade. I was in the first grade. Mrs. Smith was my teacher and her husband was the principal. She was a wonderful teacher. Some of the people that started school with me back in 1920 were Vonda Speirs, Eloise Lemon, Mary Hoff, Don Showalter, and Lawrence Siddoway. [They] were classmates of mine. Marvin Jackson . I remember one little story we had was about a dancing bear. Of course, we had to read aloud and she always let Marvin read that part in the story and every time I think of Marvin Jackson I remember him singing taty-dumb, taty-dumb, taty-dumb, dumb, dumb. That was the song the bear danced to.

Then I was promoted to the second to grade after the first grade and I was still in that school. Mrs. Margaret Bartlett was my teacher and she really taught me to write in the second. Of course, my father was a very good penman and I tried to emulate him. Mrs. Bartlett decided to promote me in the middle of the year to the third grade. I did not want to go. I would come back to her room every morning and she would send me back to the third grade. I have always been sorry that I didn’t stay with that class because I was with a different group.

My third grade teacher was my aunt, Margaret Merkley. She didn't really want me either. She had me. After, I was promoted at the end of the year into the fourth grade.

Oh, let me tell you about another classmate in the first and second grade. She came back here. It was Sally Preas. She came back here after Mrs. Preas died and they sold her home. My mother had a high school teacher in the other half of her apartment. The schoolteacher had purchased a brass bedstead from the Preas family (W.N. Preas was the father and his wife, Ella, was a cousin to my biological father), but she didn't have the money to pay for it right away. So Sally came to my mother's apartment because Mrs. Kazier wasn't home. She took one look at my mother and she said, "Well, I know who you are. You are Alice Murray, Lorna's mother." She said, "I have always hated Lorna and I hate her to this day. I was the one that should have been promoted, not her."

In the fourth grade, Miss Woolley, I can't remember her name right now. I think the fourth grade was my most difficult grade and think that was the reason it was. I was a very shy child. We had to learn the "Village Blacksmith" and I learned it, but I was too timid to get up in front of the class to recite it. So I told her my brother and sister and been very sick and I had to help my mother with the chores around the house and I hadn't had time to learn it. So she gave me a little more time. So the "Village Blacksmith" certainly was impressive.

I didn't like her very well and we started to take art lessons under her and we were supposed to draw a tree with charcoal and I drew a tree like I had seen trees. That is the only D I ever got, the drawing of a tree. It made me so I didn't want to draw anything anymore. It was **NOT??** a fun class. I especially remember the math classes in the fourth grade; they were so challenging. We had little booklets that had different math problems that could be on one page, then there was a cellophane kind of thing over it, and we could write down the answers on it, then after, it could be erased and we'd have a different set. I just loved those math lessons.

By the time I was in the fifth grade, they had hauled an old barracks building behind the first old grade school building. It housed two rooms. So, you see, by this time there was more and more children and it was expanding. Well, I went to Miss Edith Bates in that room. It was cold and it was heated a pot-bellied stove. At that time we always had to line up and march in after they shook the bell. And goody-two shoes was always first in line.

There was a kid in there by the name of Eugene Wise and, of course, on this pot-bellied stove, we always kept a pot of water so the humidity would be right. He had access to his father's watch chain and he dipped this chain in that pot of water and when she said for us to march in, he grabbed that chain and came running out and wrapped it right around my neck and I had terrible burns.

Anyway, Edith Bates and Dr. Lloyd Shimmin were courting and of course we all tittered and giggled about that. [Edith Bates later married Dr. Shimmin.] Just before school let out for Christmastime, he came and gave us all a nice little tube of Colgate dental cream and a new toothbrush, my first store bought tooth cleaner. Before that we used soap or salt or soda to clean our teeth.

One thing I dreaded in the fifth grade was the special tests that came from the state to see how well we read and whether we understood a word of it. They were very difficult books. I was always so terrified of the day when this person would come from the state to give us this important test. I don't know whether I ever passed or not. It just went in our file, they didn't ever tell us the results nor our parents. I continued to read the rest of my life. That was one of the terrifying experiences.

Another thing I should tell you about going to school in those old buildings: there was no bathroom. We had to go out to "Chicks Sales." I hated that place because it smelled so bad. **[The outhouse was commonly called Chicks Sales.] Is this correct??** Another experience from that year too. My aunt and I each received, for Christmas, a beautiful fur neck piece and a muff. Hers was black and white and mine was yellow and I didn't like it. I tried to get her to trade and she wouldn't. There was a mean kid in our room by the name of Lester Fowler and he was always teasing me. One day he grabbed my muff and fur piece from where it was hanging and ran out and threw it down the hole in Chick Sales.

I went to the sixth grade. I should have told you, in the fourth grade I went to that old square, brick building on the corner across for the Curry Manor. I went in that building for the fourth and grade also the sixth grade. My teacher was Miss Johnson. By this time we were learning to behave ourselves. We never left our rooms unless everything was picked up and neatly in our desks. We didn't leave messes around. After I graduated from the sixth grade, they started to have Jr. High school.

There was an old building that I went to for the seventh and eighth grades. It was the old Uintah Academy building. I did have some high school classes in that building. I had algebra and geometry. Algebra from Mr. Bronson and geometry from Mr. ... Anyway he was a very good teacher. He encouraged me, he said, "I wish you would go to the University of Utah and become a math teacher." Maybe that is what I should have done, I don't know.

We had a new high school building, a very nice building. In seventh grade I had Miss Smart, Muriel. She married Bill Wallis of the Vernal Express. She was my civics teacher. I learned a lot of civics there that is not applying to this day. We learned about the end of monopolies and now, of course, monopolies are all back, contrary to what I learned in civics.

Anyway, I went on to high school and she was my phys. ed. teacher and my dancing teacher. That was what I liked best. Harold Lundell was my botany teacher, I loved that class. The principal was Mr. Iverson. My freshman English teacher was Miss Stella Harris and she married Lloyd Oaks. Her son, Dallin is an apostle. Wonderful, wonderful teacher. I wanted to have her forever.

Then I took typing from Miss Bosch. That's the only team I was ever on. I was on the typing team. I could do ninety-five words a minute with no mistakes. That was on a manual. I still have it. We went to Roosevelt to compete and we won the contest.

I took accounting from Ralph Siddoway. I love accounting. I should have been an accountant. I had Marva Hodson as a physiology teacher; Ruth Hart was my senior English teacher. There was others that were just wonderful. Given a moment I could recall all of them. I graduated in 1931 and went to Brigham Young University when I was seventeen years old.

KI: About that time the Depression hit pretty hard here.

Lorna: Oh yes, it was terrible. I started to tell you about the offices I had worked in in the old courthouse. I had gone away to college and came back and I worked in the old Farm Bureau Building. I worked for Elmer Lind. They were reducing the cattle herds at that time to keep the price up for the ranchers. We had to keep very meticulous records and Mr. Lind was a little careless. He threw a lot of stuff away that I saved and kept on file because they would come to inspect those records and see what happened. The cattle had to be disposed of methodically. Well, they came to inspect his records and this pile of records was missing. I never saw that man, when I came back, that he didn't thank me for keeping all those records. He said it kept him from going to the penitentiary.

KI: Did you start to work in the county courthouse before you graduated from high school?

Lorna: Yes, I was paid with no-good checks. The county didn't have any money. I worked for twenty-five cents an hour and when I went in as county clerk, I received \$99 for that month. But they were no good checks. The county had no money. I sold my [weekly] checks to Mr. Siddoway at the bank for \$18.50 and that is the money I had to go away to college on.

KI: How much were the checks supposed to be for?

Lorna: Well, the ones I originally sold were \$25 and I got \$18.50 because he could wait for the money; he was rich. This was Ralph's dad, William H. Siddoway. He was president of the school board when I

graduated from high school. I went to receive my diploma from him and he grabbed me and kissed and hugged me. I was so embarrassed. My family and the Siddoway family were good friends.

Lorna Siddoway was one of my very best friends, Helen Banks and Donna Hanks. Lorna was Ralph's sister, the youngest one. She had a bicycle and she often took me on the handlebars to the Confectionary.

KI: Is that where you liked spend time when you were not at home? What did you do when you were in high school when you were not working?

Lorna: I played. There were three girls, Kalma Young, Barta Henderson and I; we played the violin and Kalma's sister played the piano, in fact, she used to play the organ in the Vogue Theater for the silent movies. She had stacks of music and was willing to listen to us while we all played together.

We played for everything. That was about 1928, when they first organized the Lion's Club. They had the school's cooking students prepare the food and they had these banquets at the new high school in the sewing room because they had these long tables. We cooked the food and Kalma, Barta and I furnished the music. Barta was a sister to Charles Henderson. They lived in the big two, story house, there on Main Street where the Antlers Motel is.

It was during the Depression; they came upon hard times. Mr. Henderson was the county treasurer and he picked up quite a bit of property on tax sales. I asked Charles not too long ago, maybe four years ago, I said, "Charles, are you buying up all the available property on tax sales?" He said, "Absolutely not. I saw my father do that and he couldn't pay the taxes or anything else and we lost everything we had. They lost their home."

Charles was quite an entrepreneur; he was always doing something to earn money and promote Vernal. He built the first motel on that property, west of the family's living quarters. "Camp cabins" is what they called them at that time. On the corner there he put in a miniature golf course, where JB's Restaurant is [475 West Main]. They owned quite a bit of property there, maybe half a block. I remember a Mr. DeMoisy, a wonderful old attorney that was here, lived on the corner, from there on 1<sup>st</sup> South. On the other corner, 5<sup>th</sup> West, was an old grocery story, called the Corner Store. Mr. Farr had the little grocery store on 1<sup>st</sup> South. The high school kids, of course, loved to go there and buy candy bars, if they could scrape enough pennies together. People didn't have any money.

I remember in grade school, when they would come with the tuberculosis stamps, they would give us so many and we had to sell them to somebody, well I always sold them to my parents and how hard it was for me because I knew they didn't have the money. It was just a dollar, they would give us each a dollar's worth of stamps, my parents would buy them. Kids didn't have any money to spend, very few.

KI: Let's go back to the Confectionary for a second.

Lorna: Oh, that Confectionary. It belonged to Pontha Calder and it was on [the west side of] South Vernal Avenue. After the bank was a pool hall, belonged to Brownie Hatch. After that was this building which housed the Confectionary. They made beautiful taffy with those machines and they made wonderful chocolates. They sold commercial chocolates. The name of the commercial chocolate was "Pink Lady Chocolates." The most beautiful picture on the box. I remember my so-called stepfather, who worked in the bank at that time used to heap gifts on me, and I had my first box of Pink Lady Chocolates. He also bought me a little pearl necklace. He worked in the Uintah State Bank.

My stepfather left home when he was eight years old and was on his own from that day forward. His father was a polygamist and his mother was the oldest wife. By this time he didn't care much for her and was mean to her. This eight-year-old boy had had enough and he left home and went to live with Bry

Stringham's father.

I don't know too much about this polygamist family because he resented that so much. He did not believe in polygamy. He and my grandfather Merkley used to tangle every time Grandfather came for home teaching.

Anyway, back to the Confectionary. They made their own chocolates and everything. I remember the two ladies that worked there were very fat and they were beautiful, two of the most beautiful ladies I have ever seen. One was Mima Davis and the other was Marie Calder. She died very young. After she died they went out of the Confectionary business. She was one of Pontha Calder's daughters. Mima Davis married Mr. Erickson and moved to Murray.

After that Sarah Rudge and Mae Long Jorgensen had a little café. Oh, before that, there was the hat shop. Mrs. Martin [had that] and she smoked. She had a [cigarette] holder. We first grade children and on up—that was one reason we used to come past there, to see if she was in there smoking this fancy thing. There was that, then the café, then the Odd Fellows Lodge, it was some place in that area. Then, of course, around the corner, there had been the Dillman Mortuary. Eventually, that was moved to their home. Even though it was vacant I wouldn't go up that street. I wouldn't go past that building.

KI: Someone told me that during this time period, the Dillmans had a pet deer that ran around town. Do you remember that?

Lorna: Yes, they did. That was a little later than when I was talking about. I think that was after she [Bessie Dillman] married Mr. Swain. Anyway that's true. It was a buck. Often, different people would pick up these animals, thinking they were abandoned.

Isabelle Thorne was one of my good friends. She used to come with me after school and she would stay and stay, we could hardly get her to go home. I never did go to her home. Rhoda was younger.

A group of us, the Preas girls, Helen Banks, the Thorne girls and different ones, we used to always go picnicking. And we went with Mother Adams in the old Master Buick. What good times we had! She was a wonderful lady. She just loved to gather up the kids. 'Course, I had to get up early and get my Saturday's work done before I could go. I always made it on time.

KI: Where did you go with her?

Lorna: We went to various places. We used to go the Siddoway pasture, where the Haslems have built all those home. We used go out on the Gibson place, out in that area, those wonderful swamps where there were wildflowers. One place we went was over towards Fort Duchesne. How can I describe it? There is really a gully there with a wonderful, old cottonwood tree. She used to like to go there, it was an ugly place. We never did like to go there, but we went. I finally figured out why we went there: because we always had to pick up the trash wherever we went and there was always lots of trash. I can show you exactly where it is.

KI: Did she just tell you all to go to her house at a certain time to go? How did you arrange these outings?

Lorna: Oh, she just called somebody and it would blossom from there. The thing that I always brought, my grandmother used to make lots of kinds of pickles and she would make dill pickles in a two-quart jar, the most delicious dill pickles you could imagine. That's what I contributed every time to the picnic. We all, more or less, knew what we were supposed to bring. Lorna Siddoway brought a chocolate cake, which her sister made. The most delicious chocolate I've ever eaten. I wanted to get the recipe from Marva before she died, but I didn't.

Those were really fun days. When we first started going in the Master Buick, Mr. Warner was the



driver. I can tell you there were kids hanging from the sides, every place. Had a great big old trunk on the back. I guess that's where we put the picnic stuff. There was no room in the car for anything. But after Mr. Warner died, Gordon Young was the chauffeur. He was also one of the group and we had lots of fun, boys came, too, Howard Calder, Don Richardson, and Gordon Young—wild kids.

She was always friendly to everybody that came to town. If they got in trouble, they either would go to her place or to my grandparents'.

One time there was a group of Boy Scouts from Waco, Texas, and while they were here this one boy developed an appendicitis and had to be operated on. He was here quite a while. So we were all very nice to him. He wrote to me for years. The service people that came through, she was always very good to them.

KI: Do you remember why Mother Adam's son died?

Lorna: I don't remember why he died, I remember one story about him. He was a very good friend of my mother's. The other town ditch came down Main Street and it was open for years and years. I know he fell in the ditch, there was a culvert going through the business area from where Mrs. Adams lived. They just saved him from going into that culvert where he would have drowned. After that they put a grill in front of that. I don't remember my mother saying why he died. He was very young and she had only the one son. I never did know him, of course, he was gone; the father was gone before I came into the picture. All I know is what Mother Adams would say about him and what my mother would say because he was a playmate of hers.

After Gordon Young stopped driving the Master Buick, she had a girl by the name of Ora Hunt who drove for her a long time. After that I was away to college. Wonderful lady.

KI: What else do you remember about the stores downtown? The businesses?

Lorna: You know where Mother Adam's home was? Well, she owned the property just above where that old Texaco Station is [approximately 210 West Main]. She owned that. The first part of [the block] was vacant, then she had a great big building which had housed their store. They had a store there at one time and that building is up Dry Fork Canyon now. They moved it, the Hub Building they called it. Then she lived in a little building east of that and above that was that building which was built by O. Norman Olsen. You know what is west of that. They are for sale now, one [235 West Main] which belonged to N. G. Sowards, whose daughter played the piano and my mother took lessons from her. Then there is the next building, I think it used to be the old Opera House [251 West Main], then the Ratliffs bought it and remodeled it. I always I thought if I could only live in that house, it would be so wonderful.

Anyway going east from the property that Mother Adams had, on that corner, I think it was vacant till you got to the old Farm Bureau Building. Below [east of] that, John McNaughton owned several little buildings in there; I think one of them is where they had an electric shop. Then it was the old Gipson Hotel, then a vacant building, then on the corner of First [West] and Main was the old Acorn Store, it was just general merchandise, dress goods and things like that.

Below that there was a building, it was a dress shop on the first floor, and then above that it used to be the hospital, years and years ago, probably a hundred years ago.

KI: The parish house for the Episcopal Church was the hospital for a while, so would it have been before or after that?

Lorna: Oh, much, much before. That's where my father, my stepfather, when he was sick one time, was, in that building, in that hospital there.

KI: Would that have been on First West?

Lorna: Below First West. After this building that I just described was the library. Mrs. Manker, I think, was the first librarian, but during my time it was Mrs. Pope. There weren't that many books, but you had the greatest respect for this in checking out *Peter Rabbit* and those things.

I think after that it was Charlie Davis' and Mr. Morrison's butcher shop. After that there was quite a vacant space, where we would go down Main Street, turn the corner at First West and go behind the Acorn Store and all these buildings that were there, where we tied our horses. There were places to tie horses. After that vacant spot the Morelands had a hat shop and probably other things, but I remember particularly the hat shop because my mother took me there when I was in the first grade and bought me a velvet hat that was lined with cerise. I remember that hat and, of course, her daughter Marjorie was one of my friends in the first grade, too.

After that it was the Ashtons, who had the mercantile business and they did have groceries there, too, during my high school years. They had the dry goods department, the dress department, men's clothing. Then there was the Bank of Vernal Building and there was a space there to go upstairs to offices up on top of the Bank of Vernal Building.

Of course, we are down to Vernal Avenue. The place where the Cobble Rock Station was was vacant for quite a while. They had a garage in the building to the south. Byron Thomas and T.G. Alexander had a garage there. During the winter months it would be so cold, those of us who did eventually have cars, if we went to a dance at the Imperial, our Father had to store the car in there.

I really can't remember just what buildings were there. Of course, eventually there was those movie houses, but there were things there before. The east corner of that block was vacant. First of all it belonged to my great-grandfather Merkley, then it belonged to the Coltharps. Aunt Sadie Coltharp was a sister to my grandfather Merkley. Then after that you got into the housing part. And she and her husband, Aunt Sadie Coltharp, owned all the property in the next block, they owned the whole block. That's where the Lamplighter Hotel is now. She had two children, Ella Preas and Horace Coltharp, they were cousins to my father. She built those houses for them and gave them everything it them. They were really wealthy people.

I've just remembered now what was in part of the area below where the Cobble Rock Station is. Arch Lewis had a garage. I think he sold Ford automobiles and his establishment was in there and eventually he moved over [east??] in that block where, I guess, they still have used cars there now, Showalter. Yes, Showalter eventually bought that area and put in the Ford dealership.

KI: So across the street was the Trailways Bus Line station and the 7-11 Café.

Lorna: Yes, but for a long time they weren't there. That property originally belonged Lycurgus Johnson. He owned a lot of that property and also he owned property up in Maeser.

Going back up to 5<sup>th</sup> West, have you ever heard of the J.G. Peppard Seed Company?

KI: I have.

Lorna: Who told you about it?

KI: I read about it in the *Vernal Express*.

Lorna: I've mentioned that to so many people and they've never heard of it.

KI: The place was down where the old Opera House was on 500 West, wasn't it?

Lorna: J.G. Peppard Seed Company. We in Vernal pronounce it "Peppered."

KI: It was where Workman had the Opera House.

Lorna: Yes, the Workman Opera House.

KI: Where Basin Sports is?

Lorna: Where the Basin Sports is, my uncle owned property on the corner and where the Basin Sports is is where the Peppard Seed Company was and the reason that it was there, because originally they raised alfalfa.

End of tape.

Lorna: Well, they raised the alfalfa to feed the stock but at the same time there was a need for alfalfa seed and clover seed and that why this Peppard Seed came into being, because they raised all this wonderful alfalfa and clover. Another use for the seed they sold, one result for raising all this alfalfa and clover for the seed was the bee industry. The bees had to be imported here to pollinate the flowers of the alfalfa and clover. So the bees were here, so the next product was honey. That came to be the famous Uinta Basin Honey. That was born in 1972 **[IS THIS THE RIGHT DATE??]** which was a major industry and is still famous all over the world really.

KI: Is there a particular kind of alfalfa that they grow that is good for the honey?

Lorna: No, it was just whatever they grew, I don't think it was any particular type. They raised yellow clover and white clover. I remember that because my uncle had a big field of yellow clover and others had white.

KI: Who was your uncle?

Lorna: Ellis Merkley. The first person, I think, to make honey was my great-uncle, my grandfather's brother, Jim Hacking, James C. Hacking. Then there were other people. I remember the Linds, an outstanding family in the valley. It was called Lind's honey. The Linds for whom that was named lived over here in Maeser, but it originated down in Davis Ward, that's where his forebears lived. There was another man, who came, Hampton, took over that area. He was in business for a long time.

Another thing, in the early days, we didn't have a Uintah High School, it was the Uintah Academy and it was just one building located south and west of the swimming pool [approximately 600 West 200 South]. That's where I went to Jr. High School. They didn't have a gymnasium, but in this Peppard Seed Company, they had a great big gymnasium and that's where the high school boys played basketball, in there.

KI: Why did they have a gymnasium?

Lorna: I don't know, maybe it wasn't necessarily a gymnasium, but that's where they played, it was just a big room and I can't tell you why. I was never in it, I was a little girl, but I had twin uncles who played basketball. Iowa Clive and Clyde Hacking, Ike and Clyde, they were identical twins. They could just

change places and keep the other team confused. They didn't travel far and wide like they do now because the roads were so terrible and transportation wasn't that great. So they had what they called the Round Robin Tournament every year and that was—well, they did that here in the old Imperial Hall. They would come from Price and the immediate vicinity to play basketball, then the winner of that tournament would go to Salt Lake. They were all high school teams.

One year I remember they had really gone to State and were about to be able to go to Chicago. There was a fellow on the team by the name of George McCurdy and they didn't really keep accurate records of the birth dates of these people born then. There was some question about his birth date and so the powers that be decided they could eliminate Uintah High School by having him kicked off the team. They thought he might be too old, they were hoping. I remember my father stayed up all night long looking through records, 'course he was the county clerk and he discovered that George McCurdy was, in fact, just old enough to play on the team. If they had defeated the Dixie Flyers, they would have gone to Chicago, but they didn't defeat the Dixie Flyers.

KI: Do you remember about what year that was?

Lorna: That was probably around 1922, something like that.

KI: Because we have the old yearbooks and it might be interesting to see if they have a picture in there.

Lorna: Do you know where you got those old yearbooks?

KI: From you?

Lorna: From me, and I'm sorry I gave them to you. I also gave you a picture of Thomas W. O'Donnell and Mr. Curry, Lewis Curry, and they didn't seem to be very happy about those. They didn't have any idea who they were. I hope those pictures didn't get lost.

KI: Oh no, we have them.

Lorna: Good, because they were given to us by those men, they were family friends. My father worked for Mr. Curry down in Ouray and I have a few snapshots of Mr. Curry at that time if you would be interested.

KI: Certainly. How long was the seed company in business?

Lorna: I don't know. I just know that big building was there right about where Basin Sports is.

KI: There was a social hall someplace along in there.

Lorna: The Social Hall was down where that big white building is, just above the Farm Bureau Building. His Opera House, or whatever it was called it, was back of that, is my understanding from what my mother told me.

KI: I just wondered if the seed company was there because I thought the Opera House was on 5<sup>th</sup> West.

Lorna: You have it on 5<sup>th</sup> West? Well, that's a different one than my mother talked about, she used to play for the dances there.

KI: There was another one up there, Sam Browne had a social hall there too. There were two of them running at the same time because the LDS Church would switch back and forth between where they were going to hold the dances, based on who could control the drinking. I just wondered if the Opera House and the feed company were close together.

Where else were you going to go after that?

Lorna: Well, we were going to cross the street. Across Main Street on 5<sup>th</sup> West, there used to be a great big planing mill, the Red Planer Corner, it was called. Do you know anything about that? The Johnstuns, I think their homestead or the property they proved up on, shall we say, was in that area and they had this great big milling company, where they milled all kinds of lumber. That was still there until 1933 to '35, in that period, when it was finally torn down. They built a lot of houses in that area on 5<sup>th</sup> West, north on 5<sup>th</sup> West. They built a lot of those houses at different times and, of course, the original home was where the Rusts lived, that white home where the Rusts lived, and I don't know who lives there now.

KI: Was the Johnson or Johnstun?

Lorna: Johnstun, George Johnstun was the son, I don't remember what the father's name was because I didn't know him. George Johnstun, the son, built that home right next to it, that stucco home that had all those beautiful gardens. Then he built all the homes from there to Main Street and sold them one by one. They made quite a contribution to the community.

KI: What year did you graduate from school?

Lorna: 1931. Then I went to Brigham Young University. I went away when I was seventeen years old and I graduated in 1935. I got a degree in foods and nutrition and music.

KI: When you were going to school, was it out of the ordinary for a girl to finish school and get a degree?

Lorna: I guess it was, but it was never any question in our family but that we would get an education. So when I graduated, of course, I had to work. I worked in the courthouse.

In those days, of course, there was no dormitories out there. We had a good friend who came out here, he was judge of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, he was a relative and a good friend and he found a place for me to stay in a home. I lived in the same home all four years; I was just part of the family and they were a most outstanding family.

KI: What the judge's name?

Lorna: George W. Worthen

KI: Who was the family you stayed with?

Lorna: Heber C. Cotham. I worked for George H. Hansen at the university, he was head of the geology department, as a secretary.

KI: Did you pay rent to the family?

Lorna: Yes, \$25 a month, board and room.

KI: Do you remember what tuition was?

Lorna: I think it was \$150, which was a lot of money. And many people paid, it was depression time, of course, they paid with produce, potatoes, peaches, pears, tomatoes. I canned all those things. We had to can them to use them in the cafeteria to provide low cost meals for the teachers, mostly, because students couldn't even afford low cost meals. It was a different time. You tell students about that now and they just gasp.

Dave and I were married right after I graduated. There were no jobs but he did have a job. He got his master's degree that year. He couldn't afford to go to the University of Utah, Walter Cotham wanted him to come. He got his bachelor's degree in botany from BYU, then he got his master's degree in geology in 1935. He also had a degree in education and in administration. He received an offer from Eager, Arizona, as superintendent of schools for \$2800 a year which was more than Dr. Hansen was making at the Y. So he accepted that. But he wanted to work for the National Park Service, specifically in Yellowstone, because he had worked there in the summer while going to school.

KI: Let me back up a little. Where was Dave from?

Lorna: He was from Provo. His father was a railroad man and he was born in Covina, California. They lived many places but his mother said, "We have to settle down so these children can get an education."

Anyway, there came a telegram from Yosemite offering him a rangers position at \$1600 a year. So he accepted that and cancelled the other position. On his way back from accepting that position, he met a person from the telegraph office saying he had one from Yellowstone, an offer there, so he cancelled at Yosemite and went to Yellowstone. He left on his birthday and went to Yellowstone.

KI: You weren't married yet?

Lorna: No, we weren't, but we married after that on July 24<sup>th</sup>. I went up [to Yellowstone] on my vacation and decided not to leave.

KI: Did you continue to work at your secretarial job in Provo and you were taking a vacation from that?

Lorna: Well, I graduated and there were no jobs. So I got married. Then I went to the "University of Hard Knocks."

KI: Tell me about it. Tell me about the time after you got married.

Lorna: Well, his assignment was fifty miles from any road at the head of the Yellowstone River in the southeast corner of Yellowstone, the Thoroughfare Ranger Station, where we spent the summer. Then in the fall he was transferred to **Bekla??** River Ranger Station which was out of Ashton, Idaho, twenty-five miles, where we were snowed in for eight months. We had to get in everything we needed by the first of November and prepare for a long winter. That's where we spent our first winter.

KI: What did you do with yourself?

Lorna: Oh, there was plenty to do just living, and of course, he had reports to do and patrols to make, extensive patrols, and reports on what he found. We had to take the weather every day and send it in to Mammoth where it was forwarded on to Salt Lake City. That's where the airplane companies received

their information about the weather. We had to get our wood supply in, we had to carry water, beat trails. The snow was 144 inches deep.

KI: How did you get water?

Lorna: There was a spring down over the hill and he beat a path down and carried water, which we stored in GI **[galvanized iron??]** cans in the kitchen, used for culinary and drinking, separate cans for different purposes. We had a root cellar where we put our perishable things. So we were able to store canned things down there in a certain section so they didn't rust.

Of course, I had to work my entire life, living on a farm, we had twenty acres and we raised everything we ate except sugar. I was brought up to know how to do a lot of things.

We had a garden and we canned everything, we canned our meat. There was no freezing. I remember when we were snowed out on the **Bekla??** River, I was taking my professional magazine from Food and Nutrition, I well remember the article that came out in my very first magazine that I received describing this new process of "fast freezing" foods. That was in 1935.

We just hung a side of beef, or other meat that we had, in the barn and cut off a piece and used it. I wouldn't trade my adventures in life for all the money in the world. It's been a very, very interesting adventure.

KI: Tell me how long you were stationed in Yellowstone.

Lorna: I was there for twenty-four years and Dave was there during the summers. His would have been twenty-eight years, except during the war. We were transferred to Rocky Mountain for a couple of years during that time, then Dave went into the service.

KI: Why did they transfer you out of Yellowstone during the war?

Lorna: Well, because the chief park naturalist in Rocky Mountain National Park had gone into the service and they needed a man there, so they transferred Dave down there. All of the men in Yellowstone were registered for the draft in Cody, Wyoming. The draft board in Cody were filling all their quota from men out of Yellowstone, no matter how old they were. They even drafted a man that over fifty years old who had heart trouble.

We had two children and Dave didn't want to leave if he didn't have to right then, so we went to Rocky Mountain and we were there almost two years and he enlisted in the Navy. We then put all our things in storage in Denver and came here to live with my parents until the war was over.

KI: What did he do in the Navy?

Lorna: Well, he went to Fort Winfield Scott, in the first place, which was [near] the San Francisco Bay. He had to monitor all the ships coming and going, that was his first assignment, then he was stationed on a sub-chaser for a while. After that he was transferred to Hawaii with the possibility of going to the Philippines. He didn't go to the Philippines, he stayed and was in Hawaii for the balance of the war. He was in the Navy two years.

KI: How old would he have been when the war started?

Lorna: He was born in 1907 and the war started in 1941, so he was thirty-four.

KI: What was it like for you to have babies when you were living in Yellowstone?

Lorna: Well, it was just like every other person who had babies. We were stationed in Mammoth and in the summer time there were doctors there who served the whole park. In the wintertime the doctors were in Livingston, Montana, and we had to go there, where Wilson was born in 1939.

KI: Did they want you to go out there several weeks early?

Lorna: Well, that time I did because Dave had an important engagement someplace he thought he needed to be there. So he took me in a week early and it was just the most horrifying experience to be down there among strangers. Anyway, it happened. Wilson was born September 29, 1939. I remember the reports on the radio, there were no televisions, but we could hear from the office, reports of the invasion of Poland by the Germans. What a horrible thing it was.

When Mary Ann was born, she came early and she was born January 31, 1942. My mother had come up early to be with us and help while I was gone. She brought a couple of ducks.

KI: In January? To Yellowstone Park?

Lorna: Well, yes, she came by bus to Pocatello. Dave was in Pocatello to give a seminar at the University of Idaho, so she met him there and came on up with him.

I will insert another little highlight while I'm here. On his way to Pocatello he had to go through Henry's Fork country, and of course, this was the time he had been in charge of trying to enlarge the Swan Lake population, which had deteriorated to twenty-one in number. They were working on this great project over at Red Lakes in conjunction with Yellowstone to preserve the trumpeter swan.

Well, as he went through that area, lo and behold, the Army was building these big foundations for a winter patrol unit. If it had gone forward, it would have destroyed the whole trumpeter swan population. So he could hardly wait to get back and tell Mr. Rogers something had to be done. This [was] just going to ruin everything. So Mr. Rogers said, "If you will write a letter to the director of the Park Service, I will sign it and send it." Dave wrote the letter and Mr. Rogers sent it to the director of the Park Service, I can't remember his name right now. The director took it personally to Franklin D. Roosevelt and they cancelled the whole thing. Some of the buildings were beginning to come up, but it was all torn down and moved away. It went to Vail, Colorado.

KI: Right when you leave the mountains, when you travel from West Yellowstone through the mountains into Idaho, Henry's Lake Flat is right there. Is that where you're talking about?

Lorna: Yes; that's where they were going to have this great operation and it would have destroyed the whole thing.

Anyway, he brought my mother back with these domestic ducks from our farm. So I prepared a great duck dinner. Dave had been out to the ski hill with the children; they had a little ski tow and he had come in and it was snowing terribly, it was really a storm. We got up from the table and started to do the dishes and my mother said, "You had better get ready to go to the hospital." I said, "I can't! I haven't washed my hair and I haven't had a bath." She said, "Get ready and I'll go tell Dave he has to take you to Livingston." I did get my bath, but I didn't get my hair washed. He came up and we left her with Wilson. For all good purposes, the road was snowed in from Mammoth to Livingston. We made it in very short order.

KI: Was Gardner not very much of a community at that time?



Lorna: It wasn't much of a community and it still isn't very big, but it's much bigger than it was. Anyway, we got there. He called the doctor; the doctor was there and we had five minutes to spare. It was Dr. Luke's birthday and he said, "Oh dear, five minutes, I could have finished my dessert." There was no nurse or anything. He gave Dave a gown and told him to get busy.

One of my friends, earlier in the year, had a little boy. They were stationed at Gallitan. Her husband was out on a fire and her time had come. She hailed down the road crew, the road foreman took her to Livingston to the hospital. It was sixty-five miles to Livingston.

You may want to know about the schools. There were no schools, we had to hire our own teachers and buy our own supplies. The kids went to school in the old canteen building in Mammoth.

KI: At this time did all the families come to Mammoth or were there still families who were scattered around the Park? I guess this is where real home schooling occurred.

Lorna: Yes, it did. Even when we were in Mammoth we hired good old-fashioned reading, writing, arithmetic teachers, people who had gotten their certificates back in the early days when they only had to have two years. Our children went to school with four grades in a room and when it was time to go to high school there was a high school in Gardner which amounted to one teacher for all four years, for all subjects, in the basement of the old Eagle's home in Gardner.

Dave began to talk to Mr. Rogers about the situation. There were people in the community who had four and five children and they were in the maintenance department and it was really hard for them to pay. He talked to Mr. Rogers to see if they could somehow get money from the gate receipts to alleviate this problem. He didn't think so. Dave said, "Well, we need to get help from someplace on the curriculum. The situation for the high school is very difficult. People either have to split up or send their children away" He talked to Mr. Rogers about contacting the state of Wyoming because the state of Wyoming takes all the tax money, from everything, out of Yellowstone Park, every bit of it.

He talked to them about it and they said they were not interested with helping in any way, it was not their problem, because Yellowstone was created before the state. So then, he went back to Mr. Rogers and said, "What do you think about trying to get a bill through Congress that would help with this situation?" "Well," he said, "I don't think so, I don't think it would do any good."

He kept on Mr. Rogers and he said, "Well, do what you can." So Dave went to Livingston to our congressman, Wesley **DeArk??**. Mr. **DeArk** was very interested in education and he said, "Dave, if you will write the bill, I will see that it gets through Congress." And it did and they began to get help. Students who went to out-lying schools in West Yellowstone, Gardner, Cody, and out of the Snake River area received help to go to school.

KI: Was it only for families living in Yellowstone Park or did it cover families living in any national park?

Lorna: I think it grew to help families in any national park as well as any federal services. They did get an accredited school in Gardner and they finally got a nice new building in Mammoth for the students there.

But by the time our son Wilson was ready to go, there was no help. We either had to send Wilson away or do something. We couldn't afford to send him to Mount Pleasant because we had other family obligations. Well, we sent him even further than that because we found out about a scholarship program that the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire was offering for Park Service children who could qualify. They had to pass very stiff examinations. Well, we had no choice.

When I found out about it, I told Dave and he said, "Oh, we couldn't do that." I said, "We can only try." We applied and Wilson received a four-year scholarship from Phillips Exeter Academy. He

went away on the train when he was thirteen years old. It made me sick. We found what we had to do. During that time of depression, everybody found out they had to do with what they had.

So he went away and then, of course, two years later Mary Ann was ready to graduate and by this time we had an accredited high school. Mary Ann graduated with her five classmates at Gardner, Montana, and she was offered just as many scholarships all over the country as Wilson was from Phillips Exeter Academy. My children have never gone to public school. We had to provide everything for them.

We had two children and I raised two children of my brother's. He and his wife died young. He was the chief electrician in Yellowstone.

KI: I have been to Mammoth before and you said something about the old canteen where the first school was. Tell me about it.

Lorna: Yes. It certainly is dilapidated now. They haven't kept it up. We went up there three years ago to a reunion and I was horrified to go in that building. They just haven't kept it up. We worked hard, the wives and everybody. We didn't worry about how much money we could get from the government. We found out we could do a lot with elbow grease and doing what had to be done. It was nice.

KI: How many families were there?

Lorna: I can't tell you now. I think there may have been sixty-five families, maybe not that many.

KI: How many other places were you stationed in Yellowstone?

Lorna: Well, there was Thoroughfare, Bekla River, Tower Falls for a year. Then Dave was made District Ranger of the Lake District. We spent the summers there two years, then we would move into Mammoth in the winter. Then we went to Old Faithful the first of June in 1939. Up to this point, Dave was a ranger, then he went into the naturalist division which was what he was really trained for and wanted to do. In the middle of August he received an appointment as Junior Park Naturalist in Mammoth and we moved to Mammoth. Then he became Chief Park Naturalist. We left Yellowstone just before the earthquake; he was so sorry.

KI: You completely left the Park in 1959?

Lorna: Yes, we went to the Great Smoky Mountains Park from there where we spent five years. Then we left there and went to Yosemite for four years, then we went to Grand Canyon for two years, then here.

KI: Lots of famous people went to Yellowstone, didn't they?

Lorna: Yes, and of course, Dave was in a position to escort a lot of them around the loop, places of interest. We met a lot of interesting people when we were in the Park Service.

KI: Did you see a lot of bears when you were there?

Lorna: Oh, there were lots of bears and he was very interested in the grizzly bear. He spent many nights going around where the bears were, at the dumps and places where they congregated at night, counting the bears, so he knew pretty well how many grizzly bears there were in the Park. They couldn't possibly beat him from one place to the other. Then he could estimate what there might be in the back country. They hibernate up northeast toward Cook City.

It was an interesting life.

KI: What was your favorite place in the Park?

Lorna: Lake. The station was right there on the shore of the lake. Of course, it was very busy. There were things that happened that wasn't too pleasant, but it was a pleasant place to be. I have a sign on my door that I brought from Yellowstone. When we were there, there wasn't money for anything. Dave's brother was an artist, a graphic artist. He came to visit us one day and there was no sign on the Lake Ranger Station. He said, "Dave, if you will get an old board, I will make you a sign to hang on this station." He did. It hung there for years, until 1959, in fact, when we were on our way out, we passed the station and we noticed that Mr. Stevens had it loaded on his truck to take to the dump. He said, "Oh Delyle, if you don't mind, and you don't want that any more, my brother made it, and it means something to me and I'll just take it with me." His brother had passed away by this time, so we were really glad to get it.

KI: What did you like about the other places you lived?

Lorna: We didn't like it at first. We left Yellowstone.

KI: Why did you leave Yellowstone?

Lorna: Because we were transferred. We got a new superintendent and he was cleaning out. We left and went to the Smokies the first of June. We lived in Yellowstone all those years where we wore nothing but woolen underwear and Pendelton shirts. We didn't have any light cotton clothes. When we got to the Smokies, it was terrible; I couldn't breathe. All of our belongings didn't come until Thanksgiving. I was accustomed to going eighteen hours a day and getting things done. Well, I couldn't do that. It was so hot and humid. Of course, we still had company from Washington, for whom we had to entertain and cook over a hot stove. Well, I got a job in an air-conditioned office and we took them out to dinner.

We learned to love the Smokies and we learned to love the people there, and of course, the area is absolutely gorgeous; the flowers and trees were just wonderful. Many activities that we enjoyed.

So then we were suddenly transferred, after five years, to Yosemite. We didn't put in for a transfer. It was an interesting area. Mr. George B. Hartsog was the major-domo in the National Park Service, he was the director. He created more problems in the few years he was there than you can possibly imagine. He was just absolutely thoughtless.

When he decided that Dave would move from the Smokies to Yosemite, I was in the hospital. I had an emergency appendectomy, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He came to get me and on the way home, he said, "Oh, we have to pack up and leave immediately and go to Yosemite."

There was also was a study group in the Park at that time and I had invited them, along with other officials within the Smokies, to dinner. I was busy trying to get ready for that, polishing the silver and cleaning the refrigerator and everything was a mess. I would work awhile, then go in on the hot pad.

On the way home, he said, "There is the dinner scheduled, what are you going to do about that?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Don't you think you could invite the department heads' wives over and have them help you?" So when I got home I called the superintendent's wife and she was the world's worst, just absolutely helpless and hopeless. I asked her if she would come over and we could talk about it because I was sick.

She said, "Well, yes, I'll come over, but I don't know, maybe we could provide the drinks." So that's what she provided. Then we had an old barn at headquarters that had been refurbished, where we had our park wives activities. So I did get the wives of the department heads to help me and we had them to dinner, then we packed up and we moved to Yosemite.

Rode across the country. I was still not healed up.

Furthermore, the superintendent at Yosemite said to Mr. Hartsog, "Why don't you leave the Condons there till after November?" Because Dave was going to have turn right around and go back to Washington, D.C., on special assignments. Mr. Preston in Yosemite said, "There is no need for them to come right now. Why don't you leave them there and give Lorna time to recover?" Mr. Hartsog said, "No, they can get ready to move right now." So we moved.

KI: He didn't know you personally, did he?

Lorna: Oh yes, he had been to my home to dinner not too long before this all happened. Maybe the dinner wasn't good, I don't know.

Anyway we got to Yosemite and that home, the most beautiful home, was heated by a big fireplace and electric heaters. We had to have wood for the fireplace but there was no wood there. But Dave deposited us there. I had my nephew, who was living with us, and he [Dave] left and went right back to Washington. I called the office and asked if they would deliver me some wood. They said, "Oh no, you'll have to get it yourself." So Bill and I went out and gathered wood to keep ourselves warm while he was gone, and he came back Thanksgiving Day.

We loved Yosemite too. We really enjoyed it. It was very nice.

KI: Tell me what years you were in Yosemite.

Lorna: We moved there in 1964. We were there for four years. Then Hartsog decided that he was going to force Dave out of the Service. There was an interesting situation. We had a ranger there who had transferred from Dinosaur National Monument and he had been in all kinds of trouble here. He had been working down at the Gateway Bar and he was taking the garbage from the Gateway Bar, in a government truck, to the dump, among other things. 'Course, he had been in Rocky Mountain before he came here and he was there with George Hartsog. They became very buddy, buddy. Well, they transferred him to Yosemite without telling anything about his background.

He began to do all kinds of things. When they would arrest people for drunken parties at the campground or wherever, they would take the liquor and bring it into headquarters, and he would get his hands on that, and that was what he would use to do his big entertaining.

Then another thing he did, they had taken over a number of "in-holdings," the Park Service had, of summer homes. They were tearing them down to get rid of them and this ranger and the man who was in charge of maintenance were hand in glove and they were stealing that property, all that material, and taking it to the ranch of that maintenance person, down country. Dave discovered what was going on and Mr. Preston was in Washington at the time. He was the superintendent of Yosemite.

So Dave took action, because [of the] government property. He never took anything that belonged to the United States Government, no way, he wouldn't even let me borrow a poster to bring home and put on the wall, just temporarily.

So he reported first to the Regional Office in San Francisco. He took action and then he called the Superintendent of Yosemite, Mr. Preston, in Washington, and Mr. Preston said, "Dave, you should never have done that." Dave said, "That was my duty." He said, "Oh, Dave this fellow's daughter is married to..." — either the son or daughter of Mr. ... whatever, the president of the Park, Curry Park, you know, the concessions company. He said, "You should never have done it."

So they were supposedly investigating that man. Dave had taken four other people in the government car that morning down to Fresno, to a meeting concerning the Park. When he got there, there was a message coming loudly over the P.A. system: "Dave Condon call headquarters immediately." So he called and they told him he had to return immediately. "Well, I'm here in a government car and the other

men are with me.” “That doesn’t make any difference,” they said. “We’ll take care of that.” So he went back and found the he was being investigated, not Mr. **Goek.?? Spelling?**

So they told him, well, they fired him, actually, right there. Well, he was just floored.

KI: What were their reasons?

Lorna: They gave a hearing and they said if he would complain about the Chief Ranger, they would erase what they were doing to him. He said absolutely not, the Chief Ranger was doing a good job. They then offered him a job in Omaha. That didn’t amount to anything, it was just getting him out of Yosemite. He wouldn’t even have a desk or anyplace to be; he would move from one desk to another as people were sent out into the field. Dave said, “No, I’ll leave the Park Service; I’ll not go to a non-job.”

KI: He almost had thirty years in by then, didn’t he?

Lorna: Yes, he did. Anyway, it just happened so fast, everything. We decided we better call our children and tell them that we were leaving. We called Mary Ann, who happened to be working for Senator Frank Church from Idaho. Frank Church got right on it. Had Dave pursued it, many heads would have fallen. But he said, “No, I’ll leave.”

So we began to pack and he was just out of the hospital and hemorrhaging, and nobody was even speaking to us.

KI: You were packing to leave Yosemite, but you never went to Omaha?

Lorna: No, we did not. Because, Mary Ann, she’s a lot like her father, she doesn’t pause. I still have a copy of the letter that she wrote, with all its mistakes. Anyway, after that Senator Church went right to them and laid the law down, because they had broken the law.

Well, the telephone rang and it was Mr. Hartsog. “Oh, by the way, Dave, I had forgotten you had been a teacher.” He was a professor at the Y [BYU] before he left to go in the Park Service. He said, “There is a vacancy in the training center. How would you like to go to Grand Canyon as director of the training center?” Dave turned to me and said, “What shall we do?” I said, “Let’s go to Grand Canyon.” So he accepted that position.

Well, in another few minutes the telephone rang again and it was George Hartsog. He said, “Oh, Dave, there’s a program that we have with the Canadian Park Service and there is an opportunity for an exchange from Riding Mountain National Park to...” Well, Grand Canyon, I suppose, because that’s where we were headed at that time. He said, “How would you like to go to Canada for the summer?” He turned to me and I said, “Hell, yes, let’s go.”

They were going to supply us with a double-wide mobile home thing, all furnished with bedding, dishes, everything under the sun, I suppose even food. So we took some of our belongings and deposited them in a house in Grand Canyon. We loaded up a lot of other stuff and brought it and stored it in my mother’s barn. We came here, bought this place, and we took off for Canada. Right away the phone company and the postal people were on strike in Canada, so we were up there, just free as birds. We couldn’t even pay our bills because we didn’t get them. Our stuff was totally uninsured. We got through Riding Mountains; they hate Americans in the first place and us most of all.

KI: Where is Riding Mountain?

Lorna: Near Winnipeg, it’s just a little thing like this. ‘Course when they said Riding Mountain National Park, I thought—well, you know.

We got there and they didn't even have a place for us to stay. Finally, they were working on a place in the attic of any old building and they took us up to this place. There were shavings all over the floor and they were hurriedly trying to get an electric stove in, it wasn't connected but they were working on it. They had gotten some old, awful, mouse-eaten furniture, a davenport and chair from the patrol cabin some place, that was there, and two army cots. That was what we had.

KI: How old were you by this time, in your fifties?

Lorna: Yes, he was sixty-two and I was fifty-five.

Well, we just laughed. We said, "We're here for the summer, we'll make the best of it." There was a young naturalist who had a room in the same attic. He was very nice to me while Dave was working. When he went on field trips, he took me out to see things and acquaint me with the area. We finally made some very good friends who have visited us in Grand Canyon and here after we came back.

But on the way from Riding Mountain to Grand Canyon, we met some people on the way and they said, "Where are you going, Dave?" He said, "I've been appointed to be the director of the training center." They laughed and they said, "Well, they have a new director there already." Dave was going back as assistant superintendent in Grand Canyon. He discovered, at the time George Hartsog offered him the directorship of the training center, they already had a man en route, on his way, to be director of the training center.

So we settled down until we could get our affairs in order and retire and get our stuff up here. But Dave did ask, there was a vacancy at Dinosaur and he asked if he could be transferred here as superintendent or whatever at Dinosaur, so they would move our things. He said, "Absolutely not." So we loaded our stuff, we had an old truck and engaged a moving company to move our stuff, and we came back here, moved into this house.

KI: Did you go down to Grand Canyon at all?

Lorna: Oh, yes. We spent a year there. He was the assistant superintendent at the time. They treated us like we had the plague; we were in disgrace and they didn't dare talk to us. We were accustomed now, our skin was very thick and it didn't matter.

I did play bridge with different groups while I was there. [Before] the assistant superintendent's wife had been in this one elite bridge group of the hotel company and the powers that be in the Park Service. I wasn't invited to join, but that didn't bother me, I didn't realize I was blackballed. There was another group, the next tier down, very nice, nice young women and I played with them quite a bit. One of them finally came over and invited me to join the group and explained that since I had been blackballed in the other one, would I join their group. I said I would be honored.

KI: It shouldn't have mattered what happened with your husband or not, it should have just been you.

Lorna: That was the way it was and I don't how it is now. 'Course, it's very different, we lived under primitive circumstances and I wouldn't trade all the experiences for all the fresh decorations they have on their homes now.

I went to a Park wife thing down there once and this person had transferred here from Alaska and they had gathered up a lot of artifacts along the way, tools of various kinds. She had the walls completely covered, tacked up on the walls. I said, "Oh, my goodness, how do you get away with this? My husband would never even let me pound a nail in the wall." "Oh," she said, "they just completely redecorate now when we transfer." I said, "We were in the Park Service for twenty-eight years and not one time did they redecorate anything for us." Except when we moved to Yosemite, they had painted the home before we

got there and that was the only time. But we knew how to clean things up and paint them ourselves.

KI: Did you buy this house? This the only house you ever bought here in Vernal? [3330 West 2500 North]

Lorna: Yes, it wasn't this house, there was another house here. My son's wife is an architect and she came to visit before they were married. She decided the home that was here didn't justify the location. So they tore it down ten years ago, tore the garage down and built an apartment for us to live in while they tore down our house and built this one.

KI: It's a beautiful house and I understand what she means, because now you can look out there and see the pond.

Lorna: They got the house finished just four months before Dave passed away.

KI: When did he die?

Lorna: He died in 1993.

KI: I'm sorry; it's hard to be alone. When you came back, what did you do?

Lorna: Well, I've been working on this place, taking care of the yard and my home. Then Dave and I were in charge of the Community Concert Program for fifteen years and that was a real challenge and a struggle. People didn't appreciate it.

KI: Was this before or after the Uintah Arts Council?

Lorna: I think the Uintah Arts Council wasn't active at that time. This was a different set-up. We had this lady come from New York every year and help us with a program, to get it started. We had to get all the money before the different concerts that we bought.

KI: How did you get the money?

Lorna: We sold memberships and we had to sell enough memberships to pay for whatever concerts we bargained for. We did that for fifteen years. But Dave became ill and I had my mother and my uncle here for fifteen years, they were sick. Then Dave got sick and I had three people to take care of during that time. We had planned to do some traveling, but circumstances beyond our control. I wanted to see a lot of things in Utah that Dave had seen because he had gone with the botany department and the geology department to places all over the state.

He hiked all over the Uinta Mountains with Dr. Walter P. Cotham while he was studying under him. Then, of course, he was acting superintendent of Dinosaur down here, during the time we were stationed at Rocky Mountain because Dinosaur was administrated under Rocky Mountain at that time.

KI: Since it was a national monument not a national park?

Lorna: It still is a national monument. I have mixed feelings about it becoming a national park. I think it is better that it has fewer visitors so that it won't be destroyed.

KI: Who else served with you on the concert committee?

Lorna: Curtis May, Nina Pease, Rhoda DeVed. I play the violin. I played in the symphony orchestra when I was at the Y and I have played at I don't know how many funerals. One of my mother's cousins introduced me, not too long ago, to somebody and she said, "I want you to meet one of my favorite cousins, she plays at funerals." That's my claim to fame.

KI: When you came back to Vernal, what was your impression of how things had changed?

Lorna: Oh, they had changed very much, and of course, they have changed much more. See, we came back here thirty-four years ago. We bought this place in 1968 and rented it and went on to Canada, then we came back here in 1969 permanently. But of course, when I grew up here the roads were all dusty and muddy. They had changed all of that with the blacktop everywhere. There were many stores. Safeway was here when I came back. There's been several changes since then. Ashton Brothers was still Ashton Brothers and a department store. That has all changed and then there are many, many more people and many more houses, it's quite different.

Of course, the buildings along Main Street are all different. There has been many improvements, like the flowers. I think the flowers have added a great deal and they get better every year. At first I was disappointed when I saw those new lights, but when I saw they were going to have the flowers, it is absolutely beautiful.

The businesses have all changed. On South Vernal Avenue there were several bars along that section, I think there is only one now, Bud's. Uintah State Bank has changed, no clock. I think that is too bad.

KI: They did put a clock up though, on Cobble Rock. I think they probably did that because so many people had wanted the clock back where the bank was.

Lorna: See, my father worked in the Uintah State Bank. He worked with H. Belcher and I have a picture of those two in that bank.

KI: We would love to have any of those pictures. We could make copies while you stood right there.

Lorna: They would probably do just as well to be preserved there, I don't know.

KI: How many grandchildren do you have?

Lorna: Let's see, Suzanne has three. Then of course, I don't like to say my stepchild, I raised this boy of my brother's, or both of them. They have three, five, that makes eight.

My son lives in Alaska, my daughter lives in Pocatello, Idaho. She went there as a teacher in the University of Idaho. Then she got married, she has three children.

KI: Lorna, thank you so much for talking with me. I think you have led a very interesting life.